

**Utah's Division of Child and Family Services**

# **Northern Region Report**

## **Qualitative Case Review Findings**

**Review Conducted**

**February 25-28, 2013**

*A Report by*

*The Office of Services Review, Department of Human Services*

# **I. Introduction**

The Northern Region Qualitative Case Review (QCR) for FY2013 was held the week of February 25-28, 2013. Reviewers were selected from the Office of Services Review, the Division of Child and Family Services, community partners and other interested parties. There was one out-of-state reviewer from Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health who participated for a full week. There were also two individuals from Alabama who previously participated in reviews in Utah as members of the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group. They participated this year as volunteers. Reviewers also included individuals from the following Utah organizations and agencies:

- Utah Foster Care Foundation
- Christmas Box House
- Northern Region Quality Improvement Committee
- Head Start

There were 35 cases randomly selected for the Northern region review. The case sample included 27 foster care cases and eight in-home cases. All five offices in the region had cases selected as part of the random sample, which included the Bountiful, Brigham City, Clearfield, Logan, and Ogden offices. A certified lead reviewer and shadow reviewer were assigned to each case. Information was obtained through in-depth interviews with the child (if old enough to participate), his or her parents or other guardians, foster parents (if child was placed in foster care), caseworker, teacher, therapist, other service providers, and others having a significant role in the child's life. Additionally, the child's file, including prior CPS investigations and other available records, was reviewed.

Staff from the Office of Services Review met with region staff on June 26, 2013 in an exit conference to review the results of the region's QCR. Scores and data analysis were reviewed with the region.

## **II. Stakeholder Observations**

The results of the QCR should be considered within a broad context of local and regional interaction with community partners. Each year Office of Services Review staff members interview key community stakeholders such as birth families, youth, foster parents, providers, representatives from the legal community, other community agencies, and DCFS staff. On February 21, 2013 members of OSR staff interviewed individuals and groups of DCFS staff and community partners. DCFS staff who were interviewed included the Regional Director, region administrators, supervisors, and caseworkers. Community partners interviewed included an assistant attorney general, guardian ad litem, Family Support Center and Davis Behavioral Health. Strengths and opportunities for improvement were identified by the various groups of stakeholders as described below.

### **ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL AND GUARDIAN AD LITEM**

#### **Strengths**

Awareness has been raised across several agencies regarding documenting compelling reasons for the permanency goal of Individualized Permanency. It's definitely improved. They never see a problem on young children's cases anymore. The compelling reasons are valid and client driven. They're usually on the cases of older teens.

The region's Permanency Team has really been beefed up over the past year. The Adoption Team has made a concerted effort to educate kids about adoption and include them in the decision. If a child's goal isn't Adoption, it's probably because the child doesn't want to be adopted.

The Adoption Team works with foster parents who are hesitant to adopt. They think outside the box to find permanency, such as returning children to their biological parents.

Permanency Roundtable is fabulous. They take the five most difficult cases and find permanency for those kids. In Northern region there are people who are always looking from every direction for permanency for kids.

There are more teens who are moving from foster care to guardianship with relatives.

DCFS is very good about keeping the attorneys informed of what is going on in all their cases. Attorneys get notice regularly of placement changes. There's constant e-mail communication.

Drug Court is fabulous. People around the nation constantly tell them they have a very advanced drug court. Weber Human Services is writing a grant for a third drug court.

#### **Improvement Opportunities**

Concurrent goals need to be thought about earlier, even as early as the shelter hearing. Specific relatives need to be identified and invited to team meetings. Workers could do a better job of identifying specific family members, not just telling attorneys that "family" will take the kids.

Drug testing is a major issue and a significant concern. They were much happier with the previous drug testing contract. The testing hours are too limited now.

The definition of “preliminary placement” is an issue. When preliminary placements can be done and how long they can last is up for debate. Preliminary placements are usually in the best interest of the child, but there are legal questions about them.

Services that are put in place while a child is in foster care need to follow the child home. It’s surprising there isn’t more funding for in-home cases since that’s DCFS’ focus. The parents that have insurance are the hardest ones to get services for the kids because the parents can’t afford the co-pay.

Getting kin licensed is a slow process due to the kin, but DCFS could be more encouraging.

## **PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

The providers and community partners who were interviewed represented Family Support Center (FSC) and Davis Behavioral Health (DBH).

### **Strengths**

Region leadership is spectacular. They take questions, respond timely, and their leadership is great.

DBH and DCFS cost share on day treatment programs to keep kids in their homes. They’ve been staffing cases to know how to support kids in the community and not bring them into custody.

DBH looks for creative interventions to keep kids at home, such as buying an alarm system for the family.

FSC appreciates DCFS. They have a strong partnership with them that leads to providing services that are the most effective.

Local caseworkers asked FSC to teach parenting classes to their staff. This was a wonderful partnership.

DCFS caseworkers are phenomenal. They’re involved, they care, and they’re supportive.

Caseworkers look at whether therapy is something the family needs, and if so, they’re great at helping families access therapy.

DCFS is usually holding team meetings on cases and they inform FSC when they’ll be held. FSC’s voice is heard at the meetings.

### **Improvement Opportunities**

DCFS needs more regionalized group homes that include families in treatment. Instead of one large State Hospital, smaller facilities could be established in the regions.

There needs to be a line item in the state budget for in-home treatment services.

Kids need treatment foster homes that will allow the parents to be long-term participants in the kids' lives even though the kids won't ever return home.

The Logan Crisis Nursery is barely surviving. They're doing more fundraising and calling people for donations, but they don't have adequate funds.

FSC would like to have an outreach program so they could go into the homes rather than people having to come to them. They need to be able to help families that haven't come to DCFS attention yet.

FSC believes the service that is most needed is adoption respite, and more adoption support groups for kids and parents are needed.

### **POST-ADOPTION AND IN-HOME TEAMS**

#### **Strengths**

Post-adopt has done five adult adoptions this year. There's still a belief that 15-16 year olds aren't adoptable, but many kids this age want to be adopted.

The caseworkers are no longer responsible for getting kids on the Adoption Exchange because workers didn't have time to do it.

Both the Post-adoption and In-home teams get awesome support from administration.

Permanency Roundtables get good outcomes. There are many minds around the table throwing out ideas. Six of the nine children they focused on last year have found or will find permanency. This year they'll focus on two children from each office in the region.

Only about five of the 100 families that the In-home team has worked with have come back into care.

Families welcome the In-home team into their homes. Families call to ask when the worker is coming over. They're eager to share their success. Even after the cases are closed, parents continue to call their workers. They check in to let their workers know they're doing great.

#### **Improvement Opportunities**

There are only a few providers who do wrap services and they are overwhelmed. They need money to provide services without taking a child into custody.

The post-adopt team would like to be brought into cases earlier.

There is an assumption that if a child is in foster care, they need therapy. Workers need to do more assessment of whether therapy needs to continue and what is being gained from it.

Behavior issues between siblings need to be identified and addressed rather than just separating the siblings. There also needs to be more attention paid to sibling visitation.

The biggest barrier the In-home team faces is a lack of services for families. The team has to find them or provide them themselves. There are 53 service providers for foster care and only four or five for in-home. There is only one provider who does consistent therapy and medication management.

## **DCFS ADMINISTRATORS, SUPERVISORS, and CASEWORKERS**

### **Strengths**

The thought process on the In-home team is good. They're looking at things completely differently.

There are still kids on in-home cases that come into care, but they're keeping more kids at home.

There is wonderful teamwork within the Northern region. Supervisors really support each other. They can rely on each other for help.

Administration is fabulous. Caseworkers and supervisors feel very supported.

Northern region is looking at who is going to be there long term for TAL kids. They're using TAL services and WIA so kids have options rather than adoption. They're building more connections for teens.

To keep kids connected to their families they do a lot of Skyping. There's lots of attention on maintaining connections. Sometimes they do therapeutic visits at the prison. Workers are doing a better job of letting parents know when there are medical or dental appointments.

DCFS helps fathers establish paternity because they believe fathers are just as important as mothers.

The new state training manager is fantastic. She has a great background.

The ratio of cases is shifting toward more kids remaining at home. The number of foster care cases is going down and the number of in-home cases is increasing.

They were able to hire staff to bring caseloads down to an acceptable level. Retention is still an issue, but it's not that bad. Many employees are happy and would like to stay, but they leave because they need more money.

### **Improvement Opportunities**

There is a lack of placements for kids with high needs. Kids get shuffled in and out of residential placements because the providers know they have a monopoly and can just process kids through.

Lots of contracts have been lost because providers have gone private, DCFS refuses to use them, providers refuse to take DCFS kids, etc.

If DCFS could have the services they need, they could keep kids in the home. For example, they need Medicaid for therapy, parenting programs, anger management, etc.

In-home services need to be provided by specific teams that don't have foster cases. Otherwise foster cases take priority and in-home cases don't get the attention they need.

The service plan doesn't make sense to clients. The plans are too long and clients say they're generic.

Drug testing is a "nightmare." DCFS is spending more money for less service. There's very poor service to the clients. Some testing centers are only open an hour or two each day.

### **III. Child and Family Status, System Performance, Analysis, and Trends**

The QCR findings are presented in graphic form to help quantify the observations of the qualitative review. Graphs show a comparison of scores for past years' reviews with the current review. The graphs of the two broad domains of Child and Family Status and System Performance show the percent of cases in which the key indicators were judged to be "acceptable." A six-point rating scale is used to determine whether or not an indicator is judged to be acceptable. Reviewers scored each of the cases reviewed using this rating scale. The range of ratings is as follows:












- 1: Completely Unacceptable
- 2: Substantially Unacceptable
- 3: Partially Unacceptable
- 4: Minimally Acceptable
- 5: Substantially Acceptable
- 6: Optimal Status/Performance

Child and Family Status and System Performance are evaluated using 15 key indicators. Graphs presenting the overall scores for each domain are presented below. They are followed by graphs showing the distribution of scores for each indicator within each of the two domains.



## Child and Family Status Indicators

### Overall Status

Northern Child Status	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	Standard: 70% on all indicators (Exception is Safety = 85%)	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13 Current Scores	Trends
			Standard: Criteria 85% on overall score						
<b>Safety</b>	33	2	 94%	83%	87%	88%	89%	94%	Improved and above standard
<i>Child Safe from Others</i>	35	0	 100%	na	na	96%	100%	100%	Status Quo and above standard
<i>Child Risk to Self</i>	33	2	 94%	na	na	92%	89%	94%	Improved and above standard
<b>Stability</b>	31	4	 89%	92%	65%	83%	74%	89%	Improved and above standard
<b>Prospect for Permanence</b>	21	14	 60%	88%	61%	88%	74%	60%	Decreased and below standard
<b>Health/Physical Well-being</b>	35	0	 100%	100%	100%	100%	94%	100%	Improved and above standard
<b>Emot./Behavioral Well-being</b>	29	6	 83%	96%	83%	88%	83%	83%	Status Quo and above standard
<b>Learning</b>	34	1	 97%	83%	96%	96%	89%	97%	Improved and above standard
<b>Family Connections</b>	20	3	 87%	na	na	na	92%	87%	Decreased but above standard
<b>Satisfaction</b>	28	7	 80%	83%	96%	83%	94%	80%	Decreased but above standard
<b>Overall Score</b>	33	2	 94%	83%	87%	88%	86%	94%	Improved and above standard
0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%									

## Safety

**Summative Questions:** Is the child safe from threats of harm in his/her daily living, learning, working and recreational environments? Are others in the child's daily environments safe from the child? Does the child avoid self-endangerment and refrain from using behaviors that may put self and others at risk of harm?

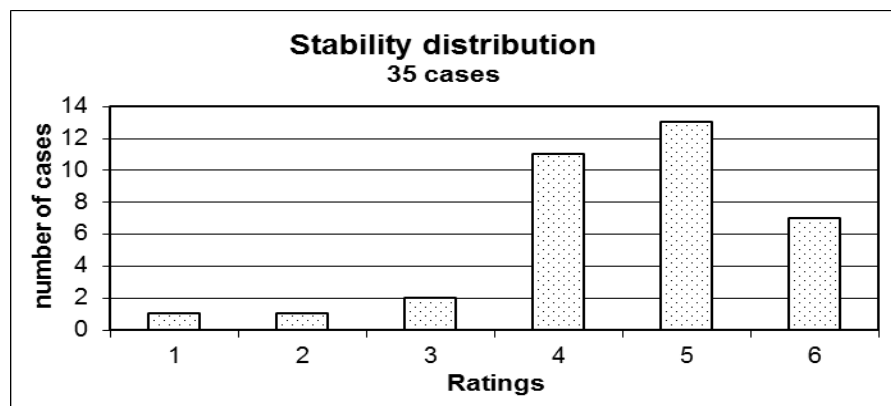
**Findings:** 94% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is a five point increase over last year's score of 89%. Out of the 35 cases reviewed, only two had unacceptable scores on Safety. In both cases the children were safe from others, but they were putting themselves and others at risk through behaviors such as physical altercations, gang involvement, drinking, and self-harming.



## Stability

**Summative Questions:** Has the child's placement setting been consistent and stable? Are the child's daily living and learning arrangements stable and free from risk of disruption? If not, are appropriate services being provided to achieve stability and reduce the probability of disruption?

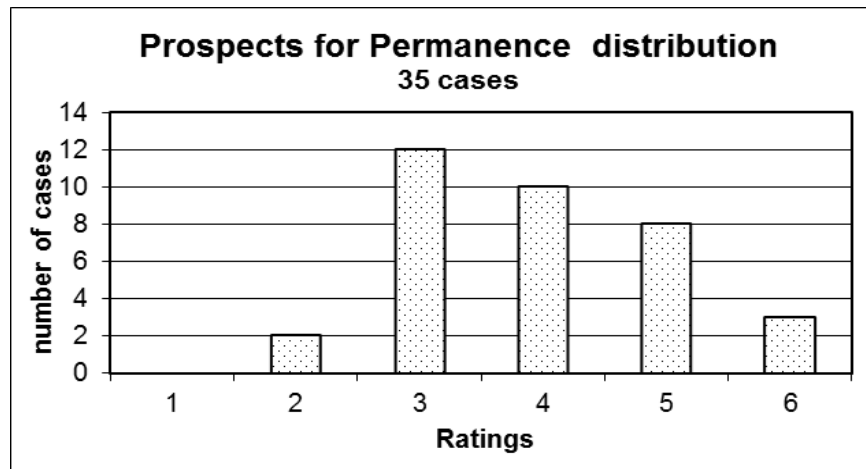
**Findings:** 89% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is a 15 point increase from last year's score of 74%.



## Prospects for Permanence

**Summative Questions:** Is the child living with caregivers that the child, caregivers, and other stakeholders believe will endure until the child becomes independent? If not, is a permanency plan presently being implemented on a timely basis that will ensure that the child will live in enduring relationships that provide a sense of family, stability, and belonging?

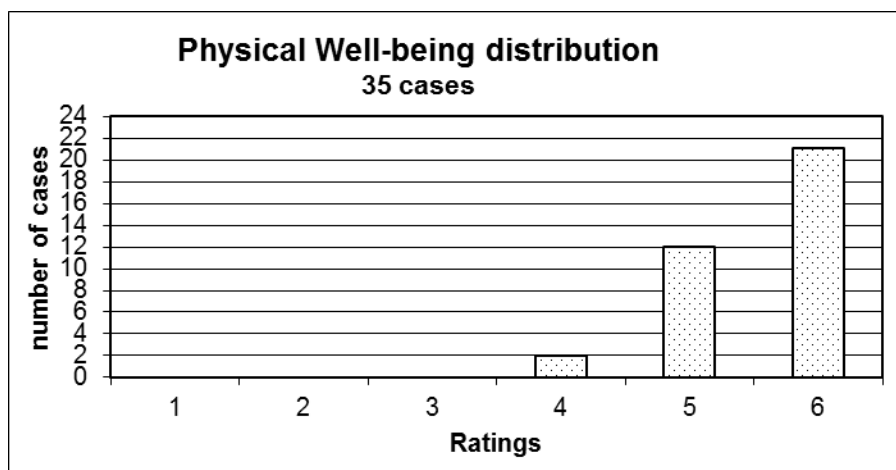
**Findings:** 60% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is a decrease from last year's score of 74%.



## Health/Physical Well-Being

**Summative Questions:** Is the child in good health? Are the child's basic physical needs being met? Does the child have health care services, as needed?

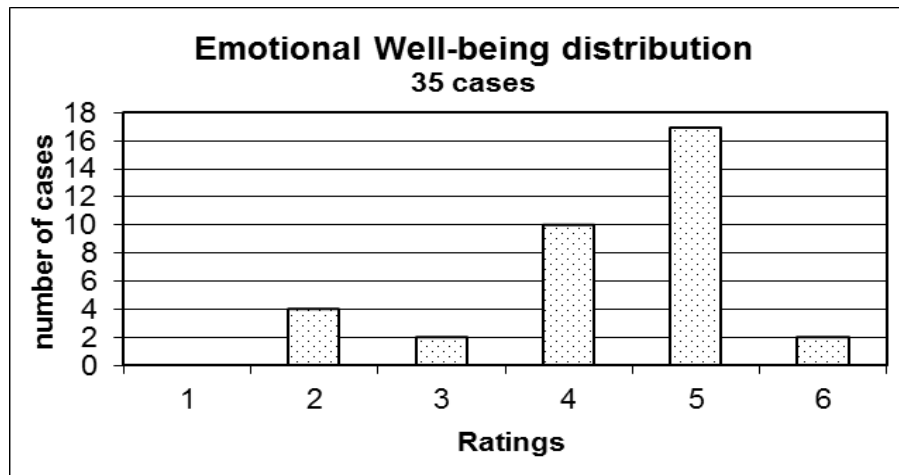
**Findings:** 100% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is six points higher than last year's score or 94%.



## Emotional/Behavioral Well-Being

**Summative Questions:** Is the child doing well emotionally and behaviorally? If not, is the child making reasonable progress toward stable and adequate functioning, emotionally and behaviorally, at home and school?

**Findings:** 83% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is identical to last year's score.

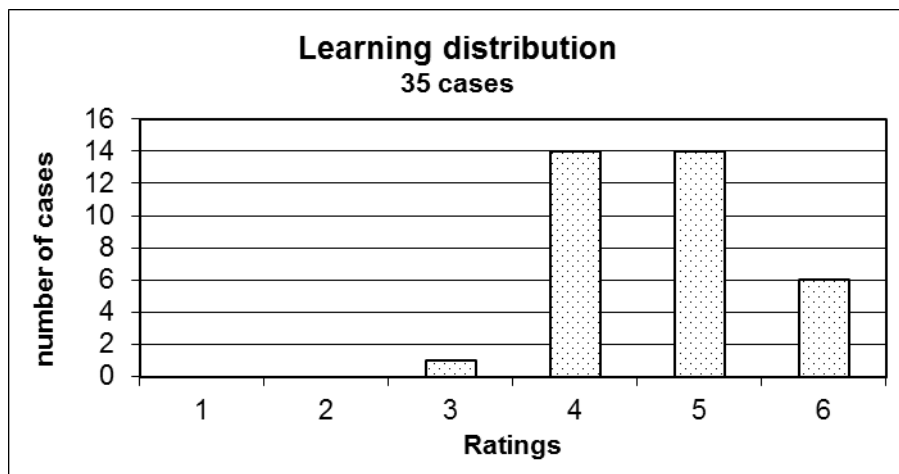


## Learning Progress

**Summative Question:** (For children age five and older.) Is the child learning, progressing and gaining essential functional capabilities at a rate commensurate with his/her age and ability?

Note: There is a supplementary scale used with children under the age of five that puts greater emphasis on developmental progress. Scores from the two scales are combined for this report.

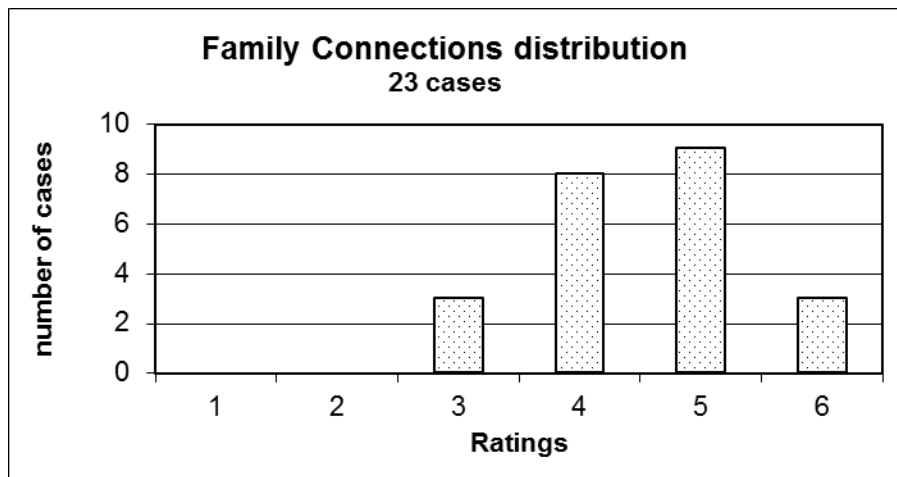
**Findings:** 97% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is eight points higher than last year's score of 89%.



## Family Connections

**Summative Question:** While the child and family are living apart, are family relationships and connections being maintained through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies, unless compelling reasons exist for keeping them apart?

**Findings:** 87% of cases scored acceptable on Overall Family Connections. This indicator measures whether or not the relationship between the child and the mother, father, siblings, and other important family members is being maintained. The scores for the mother and siblings were 90% and 92% respectively. The score for fathers was substantially lower at 64%.



Family Connections			
	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	FY13 Current Scores
Overall Connections	20	3	87%
Sibling	11	1	92%
Mother	18	2	90%
Father	7	4	64%
Other	7	1	88%

## Satisfaction

**Summative Question:** Are the child, parent/guardian, and substitute caregiver satisfied with the supports and services they are receiving?

**Findings:** 80% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6) on the overall Satisfaction score. This is a double-digit decline from last year's score of 94%. Reviewers rated the satisfaction of children, mothers, fathers, and caregivers. Scores for the individual parties ranged from 100% for children to 71% for both mothers and fathers.

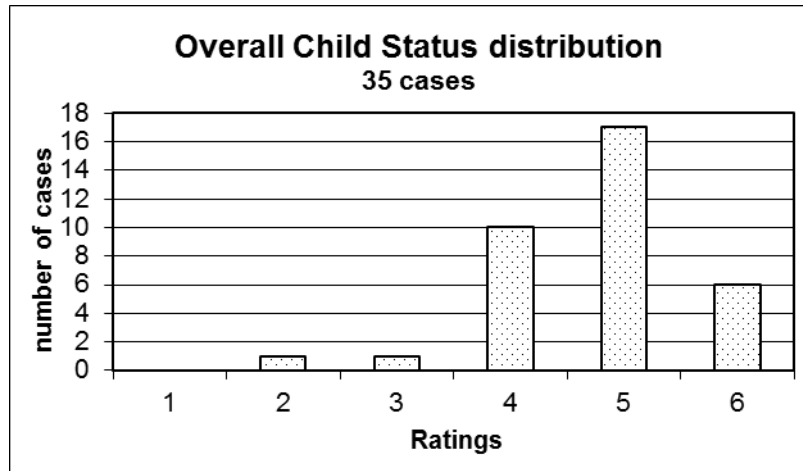


Satisfaction			
	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	FY13 Current Scores
<b>Satisfaction</b>	28	7	<b>80%</b>
Child	12	0	<b>100%</b>
Mother	17	7	<b>71%</b>
Father	10	4	<b>71%</b>
Caregiver	24	3	<b>89%</b>

## Overall Child and Family Status

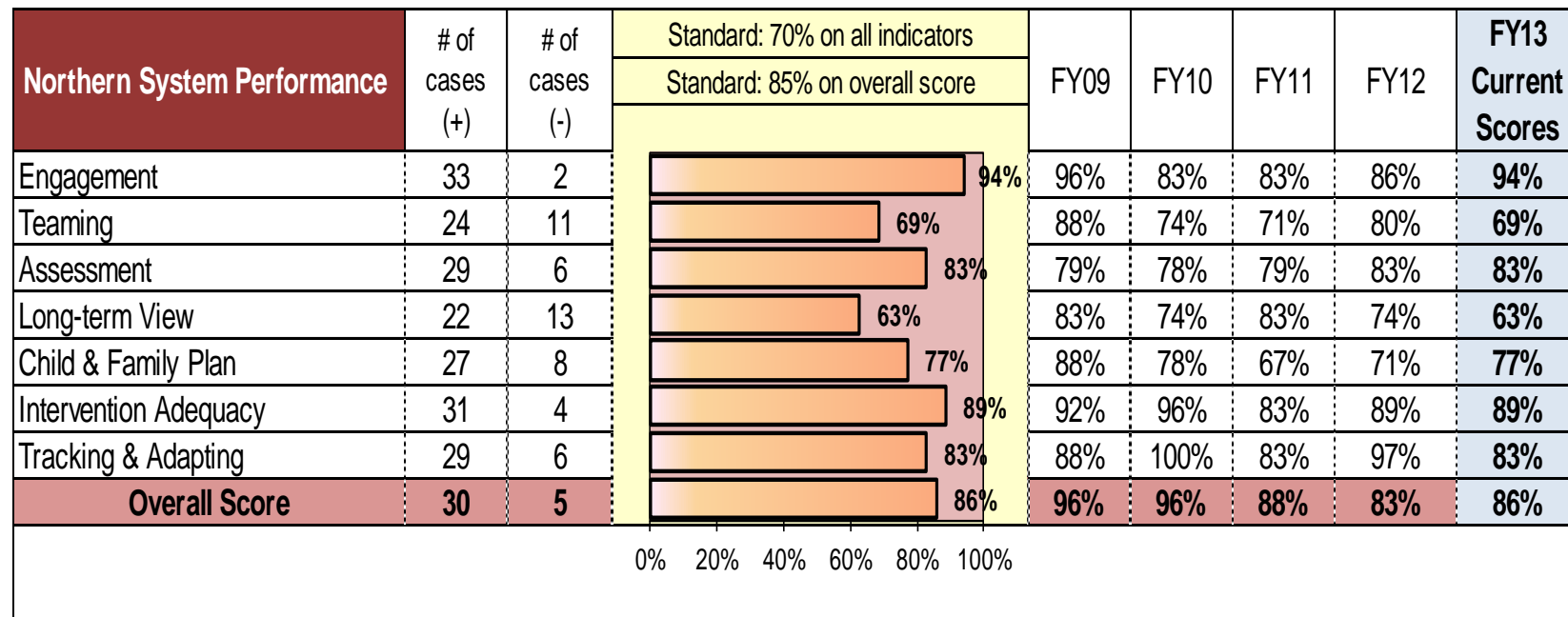
**Summative Questions:** Based on the Qualitative Case Review scores determined for the Child and Family Status indicators, how well are this child and family presently doing? A special scoring procedure is used to determine Overall Child and Family Status using the 6-point rating scale. In addition to scoring a 4 with this procedure, four of the first seven status indicators (minus Satisfaction) must score acceptable in order for the Overall Score to be acceptable. A unique condition affects the rating of Overall Child and Family status in every case: The Safety indicator always acts as a “trump” so that the Overall Child and Family status rating cannot be acceptable unless the Safety indicator is also acceptable.

**Findings:** 94% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is identical to the Safety score because the unacceptable Safety score on two cases led to unacceptable Overall Child Status on both cases. However, both of these cases had a majority of unacceptable scores on the Child Status indicators which would have led to an unacceptable score on Overall Child Status even if the Safety score had been acceptable.



## System Performance Indicators

### Overall System

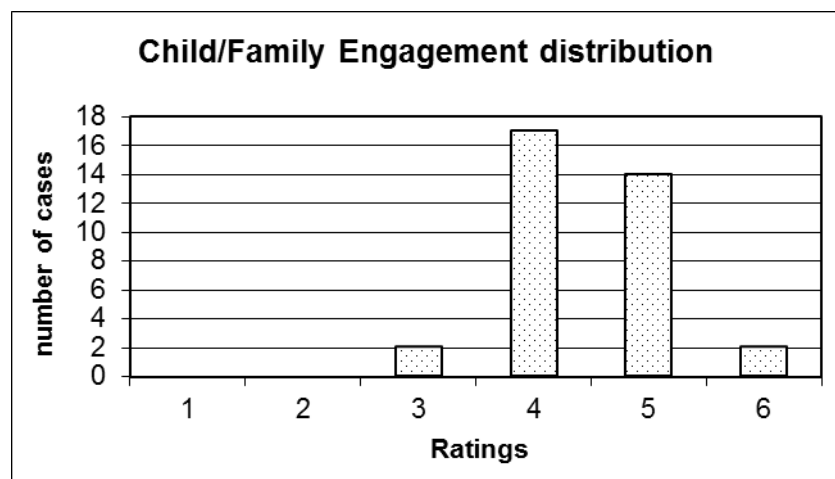




## Child and Family Engagement

**Summative Questions:** Has the agency made concerted efforts to actively involve parents and children in the service process and in making decisions about the child and family? To what extent has the agency used rapport building strategies, including special accommodations, to engage the family?

**Findings:** 94% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is an eight point increase from last year's score of 86% and well above standard. Separate scores were given for child, mother, father and guardian. An overall score was then selected by the reviewer. Scores for the various groups ranged from a high of 96% for the child to 81% for fathers.

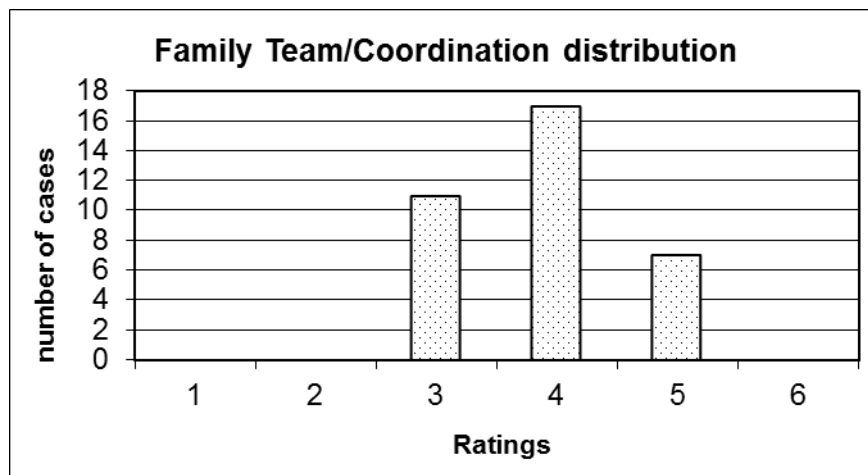


Engagement			
	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	FY13 Current Scores
Overall Engagement	33	2	94%
Child	24	1	96%
Mother	27	3	90%
Father	17	4	81%
Caregiver	16	2	89%

## Child and Family Teaming

**Summative Questions:** Do the child, family, and service providers function as a team? Do the actions of the team reflect a pattern of effective teamwork and collaboration that benefits the child and family? Is there effective coordination in the provision of services across all providers?

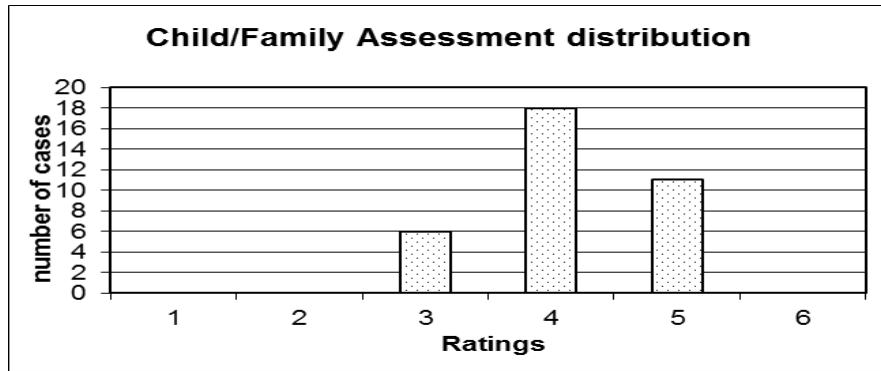
**Findings:** 69% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is a decrease from last year's score of 80% and one point below standard.



## Child and Family Assessment

**Summative Questions:** Are the current, obvious and substantial strengths and needs of the child and family identified through existing assessments, both formal and informal, so that all interveners collectively have a “big picture” understanding of the child and family? Do the assessments help the team draw conclusions on how to provide effective services to meet the child’s needs for enduring permanency, safety, and well-being? Are the critical underlying issues identified that must be resolved for the child to live safely with his/her family independent of agency supervision or to obtain an independent and enduring home?

**Findings:** 83% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is identical to last year's score and well above the 70% standard. Individual scores were given for this indicator. Scores ranged from a high of 86% for the child to a low of 71% for fathers. The scores for all parties were above the 70% standard.

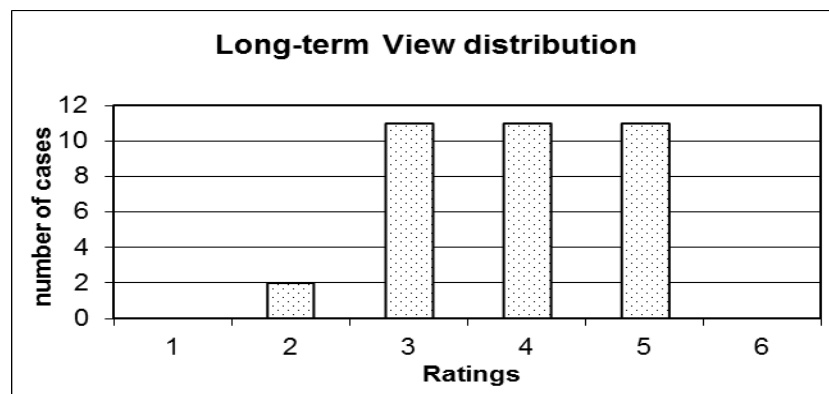


Assessment			
	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	FY13 Current Scores
<b>Overall Assessment</b>	29	6	<b>83%</b>
Child	30	5	<b>86%</b>
Mother	22	8	<b>73%</b>
Father	15	6	<b>71%</b>
Caregiver	21	6	<b>78%</b>

## Long-term View

**Summative Questions:** Is there a path that will lead the family and/or child toward achieving enduring safety and permanency without DCFS interventions? Is it realistic and achievable? Does the team, particularly the child/family, understand the path and destination? Does the path provide steps and address the next major transition(s) toward achieving enduring safety and permanence independent of DCFS interventions?

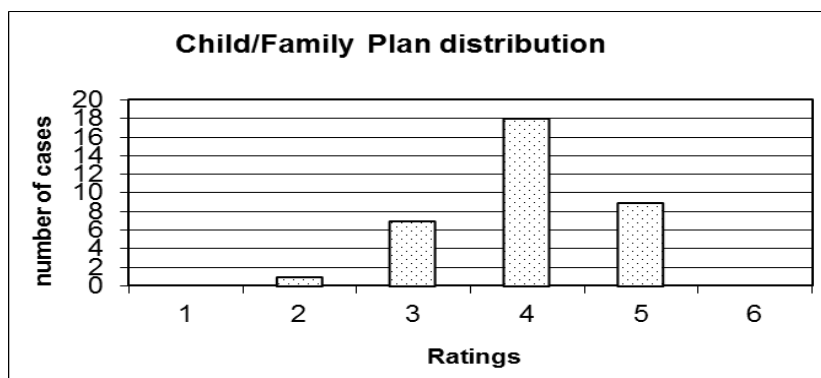
**Findings:** 63% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is a decrease from last year's score of 74% and is below standard.



## Child and Family Plan

**Summative Questions:** Is the Child and Family Plan individualized and relevant to needs and goals? Are supports, services and interventions assembled into a holistic and coherent service process that provides a mix of elements uniquely matched to the child/family's situation and preferences? Does the combination of supports and services fit the child and family's situation so as to maximize potential results and minimize conflicting strategies and inconveniences?

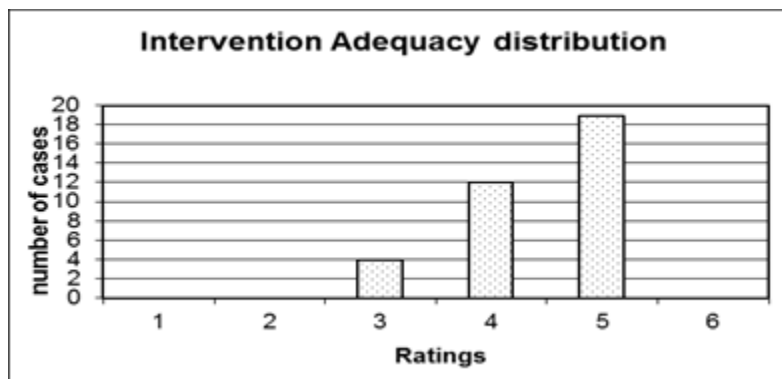
**Findings:** 77% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is a modest improvement over last year's score of 71% and above standard.



## Intervention Adequacy

**Summative Questions:** To what degree are the planned interventions, services, and supports being provided to the child and family of sufficient power (precision, intensity, duration, fidelity, and consistency) and beneficial effect to produce results that would enable the child and family to live safely and independent from DCFS?

**Findings:** 89% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is identical to last year's score and well above standard. This indicator was scored separately for Child, Mother, Father, and Caregiver. Scores ranged from a high of 92% for caregivers to 69% for fathers.

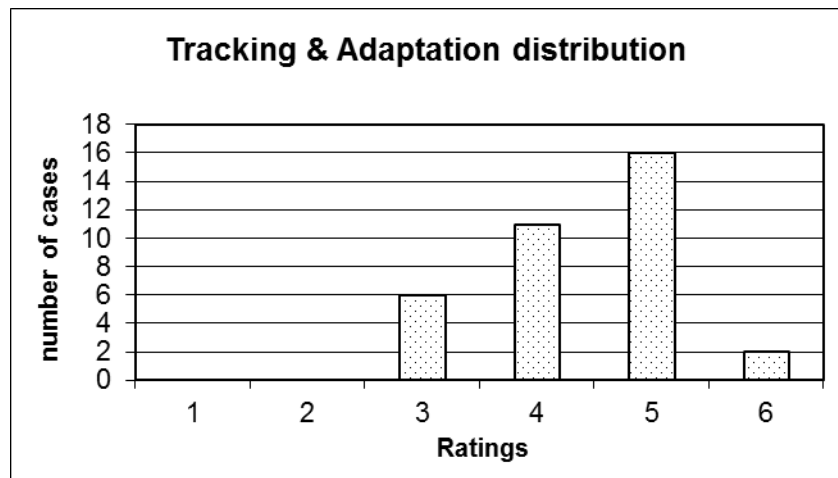


Intervention Adequacy			
	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	FY13 Current Scores
Overall Intervention Adequacy	31	4	89%
Child	30	5	86%
Mother	18	6	75%
Father	9	4	69%
Caregiver	24	2	92%

## Tracking and Adaptation

**Summative Questions:** Are the child and family status, service process, and progress routinely monitored and evaluated by the team? Are services modified to respond to the changing needs of the child and family and to apply knowledge gained about service efforts and results to create a self-correcting service process?

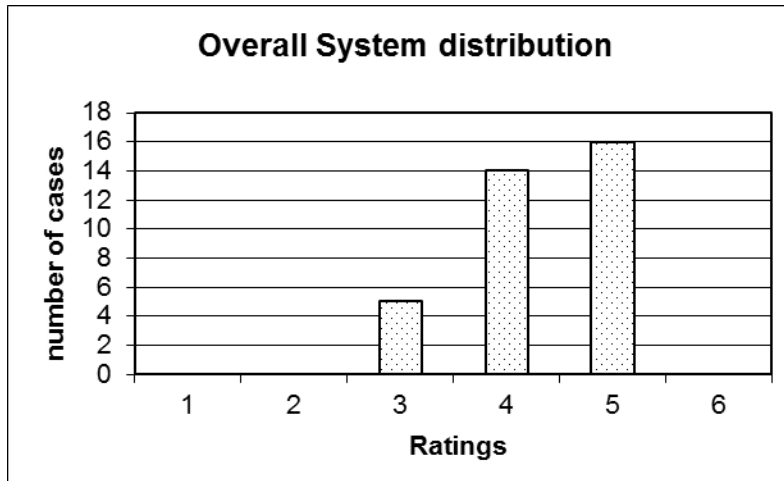
**Findings:** 83% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is a decrease from last year's score of 97% but still well above standard.



## Overall System Performance

**Summative Questions:** Based on the Qualitative Case Review scores determined for System Performance indicators, how well is the service system functioning for this child now? A special scoring procedure is used to determine Overall System Performance using the 6-point rating scale. In addition to scoring a 4 with this procedure, four of the seven system performance indicators must score acceptable in order for the overall score to be acceptable.

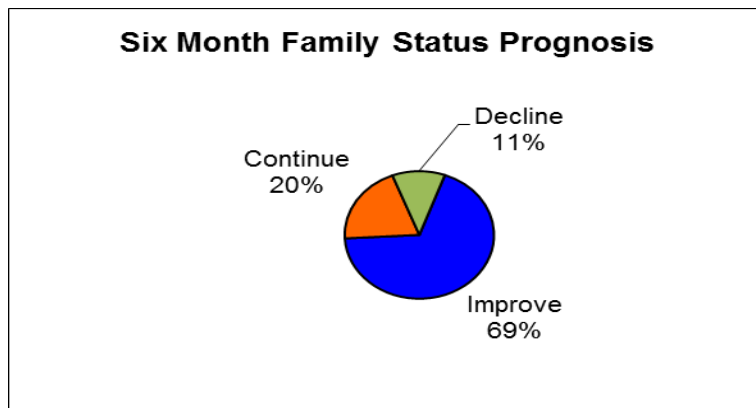
**Findings:** 86% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). The Overall System Performance score increased from last year's score of 83% and is back above the 85% standard.



### Status Forecast

One additional measure of case status is the reviewers' prognosis of the child and family's likely status in the next six months, given the current level of system performance. Reviewers respond to this question: "Based on current DCFS involvement for this child, family, and caregiver, is the child's overall status likely to improve, stay about the same, or decline over the next six months?"

Of the 35 cases reviewed, 69% (24 cases) anticipated an improvement in family status over the next six months. In 20% (7) of the cases, family status was likely to stay about the same. There were four cases where the family's status was expected to decline over the next six months.



## Outcome Matrix

The display below presents a matrix analysis of the service testing results during the current QCR. Each of the cells in the matrix shows the percent of children and families experiencing one of four possible outcomes:

- Outcome 1: child and family status acceptable, system performance acceptable
- Outcome 2: child and family status unacceptable, system performance acceptable
- Outcome 3: child and family status acceptable, system performance unacceptable
- Outcome 4: child and family status unacceptable, system performance unacceptable

The desired result is to have as many children and families in Outcome 1 as possible and as few in Outcome 4 as possible. It is fortunate that some children and families do well in spite of unacceptable system performance (Outcome 3). Experience suggests that these are most often either unusually resilient or resourceful children and families, or children and families who have some “champion” or advocate who protects them from the shortcomings of the system. Unfortunately, there may also be some children and families who, in spite of good system performance, do not do well. (These children and families would fall in Outcome 2.)

The outcome matrix for children and families reviewed during the Northern Region review indicates that 80% of the cases had acceptable ratings on both Child Status and System Performance. There were no cases that rated unacceptable on both Child Status and System Performance.

	Favorable Status of Child	Unfavorable Status of Child	
Acceptable System Performance	<b>Outcome 1</b> Good status for the child, agency services presently acceptable. n= 28 80%	<b>Outcome 2</b> Poor status for the child, agency services minimally acceptable but limited in reach or efficacy. n= 2 6%	86%
Unacceptable System Performance	<b>Outcome 3</b> Good status for the child, agency Mixed or presently unacceptable. n= 5 14%	<b>Outcome 4</b> Poor status for the child, agency presently unacceptable. n= 0 0.0%	14%
	94%	6%	

## V. Analysis of the Data

### RESULTS BY CASE TYPE

The following tables compare how the different Case Types performed on some key child status and core system performance indicators. There were no Family Preservation cases (PFP) and only one PSC case (voluntary services). The court ordered In-Home services cases (PSS) performed slightly better on Overall Child Status than foster cases (100% versus 93%) but didn't perform as well on Overall System Performance (89% to 71%). Long-term View was the lagging indicator for both case types.

Case Type		# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
Foster Care	SCF	27	93%	52%	93%	93%	67%	89%	63%	74%	89%	85%	89%
In-Home	PSS	7	100%	86%	100%	100%	71%	57%	57%	86%	86%	71%	71%
In-Home	PSC	1	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Collection of demographic information regarding cases included in the case sample includes the question, "Did the child come into services due to delinquency instead of abuse and neglect?" Only two of the 35 cases (11%) in the sample are reported to have entered services due to delinquency rather than abuse or neglect. The following table compares how cases identified as Delinquency cases and Non-Delinquency cases performed on Stability, Permanency, Overall Child Status, and Overall System Performance.

Case Type	# in Sample	Stability	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Overall System Performance
Delinquency	2	100%	0%	100%	50%
Non-Delinquency	33	88%	64%	94%	88%

### RESULTS BY PERMANENCY GOAL

The following table compares how the different Permanency Goals performed on some key child status and core system performance indicators. There were four different Permanency Goal types represented in the case sample. Surprisingly, Adoption and Individualized Permanency cases scored quite low on Prospects for Permanency at 33% and 20% respectively. All case types except Individualized Permanency scored above standard on Overall Child Status. Only Reunification cases scored above standard on Overall System Performance.



Permanency Goal	# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
Adoption	6	100%	33%	100%	83%	83%	100%	50%	50%	100%	83%	83%
Individualized Perm.	5	80%	20%	80%	100%	40%	60%	20%	80%	40%	80%	80%
Remain Home	6	100%	83%	100%	100%	83%	67%	67%	83%	83%	67%	67%
Reunification	18	94%	72%	94%	94%	67%	89%	78%	83%	100%	89%	94%

## RESULTS BY CASEWORKER DEMOGRAPHICS

### Caseload

The following table compares how caseload affected some key child status and core system performance indicators. Caseloads in the sample were divided into two categories: caseloads of 16 cases or less and caseloads of 17 cases or more. The case sample shows that 91% of the caseworkers have caseloads of 16 cases or less (30 of 33 workers). Ironically, the workers with larger caseloads performed better on Overall System Performance, which could be attributable to the small sample size of workers who had high caseloads.

Caseload Size	# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
16 cases or less	30	97%	63%	97%	93%	63%	80%	60%	77%	87%	83%	83%
17 cases or more	3	67%	33%	67%	100%	100%	100%	67%	100%	100%	100%	100%

### Worker Experience

The following table compares how Length of Employment as a caseworker impacts performance. Worker experience is concentrated at both extremes. Most workers have either less than two years of experience or more than five years of experience. Five of the workers were hired within the past year. Ironically the cases of the workers with the most experience scored the lowest on Overall System Performance. All other levels of experience scored above standard.

Length of Employment in Current Position	# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
Less than 12 months	5	100%	60%	100%	100%	60%	100%	60%	80%	100%	60%	100%
12 to 24 months	7	86%	43%	86%	86%	86%	71%	71%	100%	71%	86%	86%
24 to 36 months	3	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
36 to 48 months	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
48 to 60 months	2	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	100%	100%
60 to 72 months	8	100%	38%	100%	100%	50%	75%	50%	75%	75%	88%	88%
More than 72 months	10	90%	70%	90%	90%	60%	80%	50%	60%	100%	80%	70%

## RESULTS BY OFFICE

The following table compares how offices within the region performed on some key child status and system performance indicators. Cases from all five offices in the Northern Region were selected as part of the sample. The Bountiful and Brigham City offices scored 100% on both Overall Child Status and Overall System Performance. All offices scored above standard on Overall Child Status. Only the Bountiful and Brigham City offices scored above standard on Overall System Performance.

Office	# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
Bountiful	3	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	67%	100%	100%	100%
Brigham City	3	100%	33%	100%	100%	67%	67%	67%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Clearfield	6	100%	33%	100%	83%	67%	100%	50%	67%	83%	83%	83%
Logan	4	100%	75%	100%	100%	50%	75%	50%	50%	100%	50%	75%
Ogden	19	89%	63%	89%	95%	68%	79%	63%	84%	84%	84%	84%

## RESULTS BY AGE

OSR looked at the effect of age on Stability, Permanency, Overall Child Status, and Overall System Performance. The scores on Stability and Permanency were highest for the youngest and oldest children. They were lowest for teens ages 13 to 15, with no acceptable cases in Prospects for Permanency. The 13-15 age group also scored lowest on Overall Child Status and Overall System Performance.

Age	# in Sample	Stability	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Overall System Performance
0-5 years	12	92%	92%	100%	100%
6-12 years	13	92%	62%	100%	85%
13-15 years	4	75%	0%	75%	50%
16 + years	6	92%	92%	100%	100%

## SYSTEM CORE INDICATORS

Below is data for all system indicators (Engagement, Teaming, Assessment, Long-term View, Child and Family Plan, Intervention Adequacy, and Tracking and Adaptation) over the last 12 years showing how the ratings of 1 (completely unacceptable), 2 (substantially unacceptable), 3 (partially unacceptable), 4 (minimally acceptable), 5 (substantially acceptable) and 6 (optimal) are trending within each indicator. The table for each indicator in the section below shows an average and percentage score for that indicator. The line graph represents the percentage of the

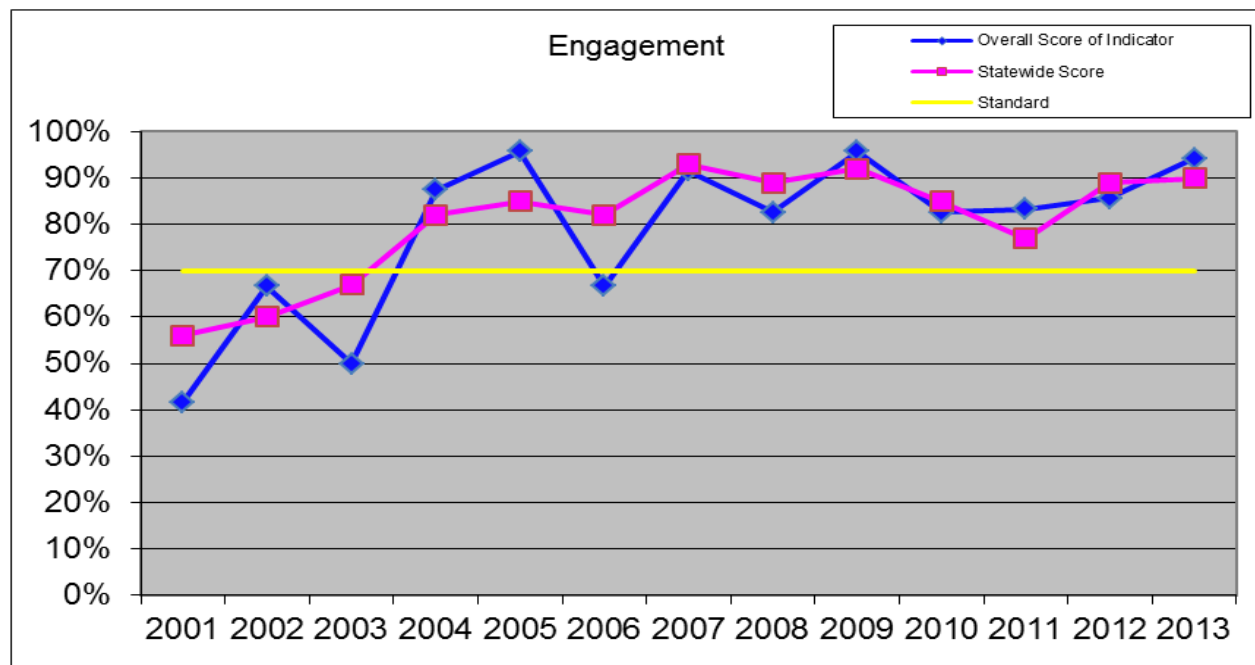
indicator that scored within the acceptable range. The most ideal trend would be to see an increase in the average score of the indicator along with an increase in the percentage score.

Northern region's score on Overall System Performance improved this year to 86%, which puts it back above standard. Last year six of the seven System Performance indicators improved, yet the Overall System Performance score declined. Conversely, this year three of the indicators declined (Team, Long-term View, and Tracking and Adapting), two stayed the same (Assessment and Intervention Adequacy) and only two improved (Engagement and Plan); however, the Overall System Performance score improved by three points.

## Child and Family Engagement

The average Engagement score declined very slightly while the percentage score improved. Even though the statewide score on this indicator is very high (90%), Northern region was able to exceed the state score.

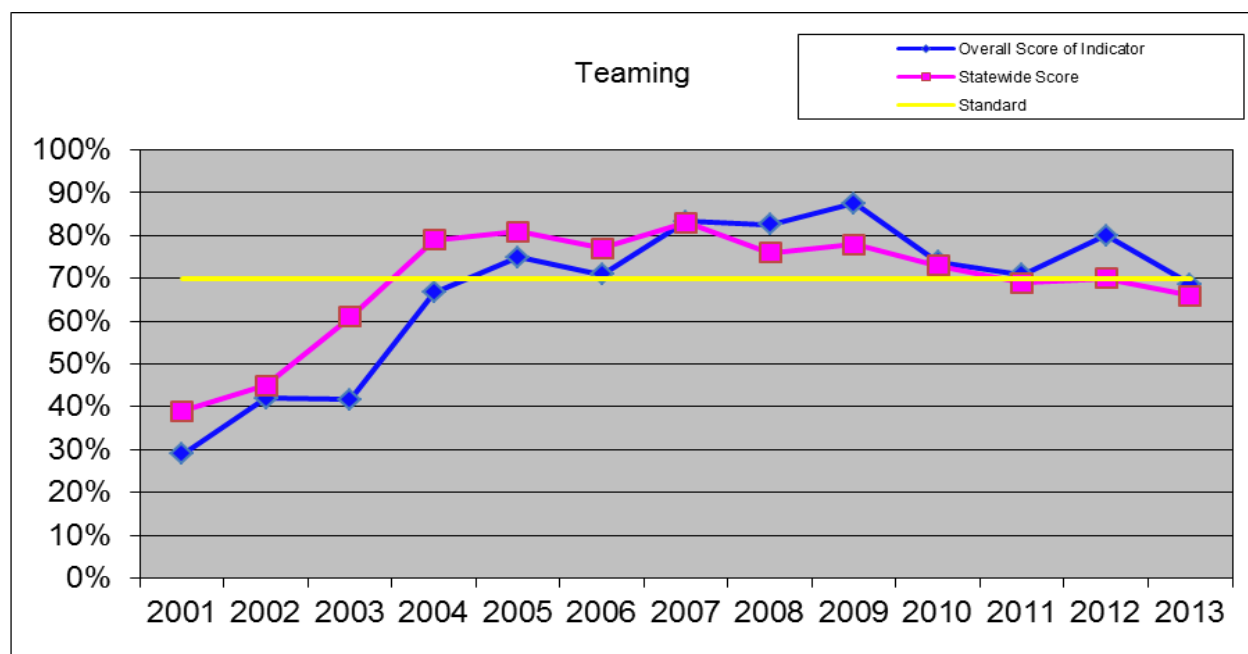
Engagement													
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Average Score of Indicator	3.21	3.54	3.21	4.17	4.54	3.79	4.46	4.22	4.46	4.35	4.46	4.49	4.46
Overall Score of Indicator	42%	67%	50%	88%	96%	67%	92%	83%	96%	83%	83%	86%	94%
Statewide Score	56%	60%	67%	82%	85%	82%	93%	89%	92%	85%	77%	89%	90%



## Child and Family Team and Coordination

After climbing to 80% last year, the Teaming score fell to 69% which is one point below standard. Both the average and the percentage scores declined. The region has scored above the state for the past several years, and that trend continued this year. Although the region score fell below standard this year, it is still above the state score.

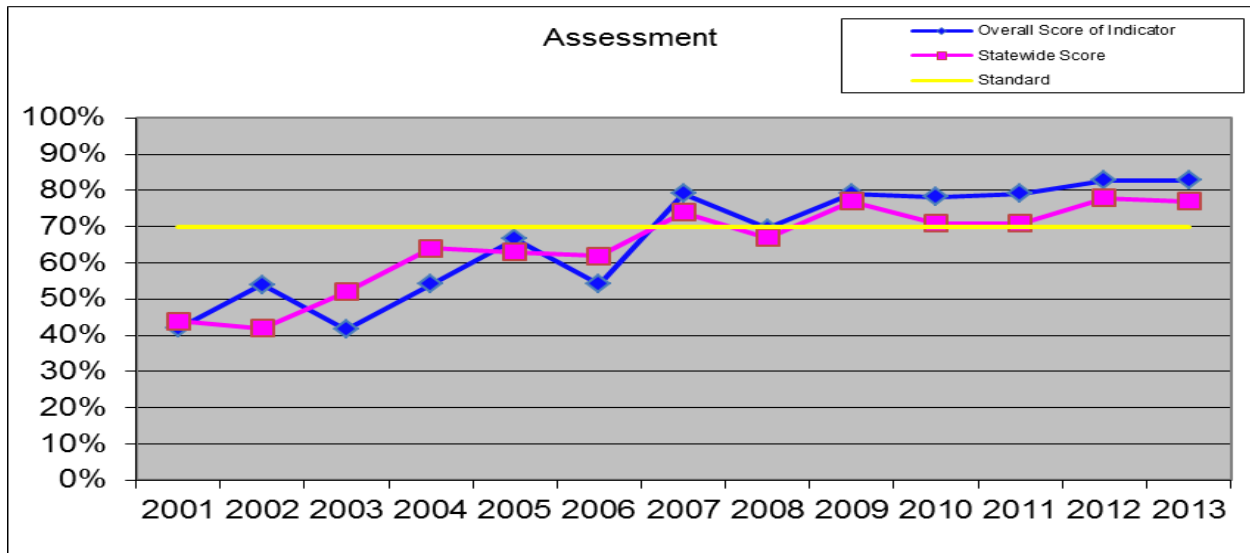
Teaming													
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Average Score of Indicator	2.96	3.46	3.38	3.83	4.08	3.96	4.25	4.17	4.21	4.04	4.21	4.06	3.89
Overall Score of Indicator	29%	42%	42%	67%	75%	71%	83%	83%	88%	74%	71%	80%	69%
Statewide Score	39%	45%	61%	79%	81%	77%	83%	76%	78%	73%	69%	70%	66%



## Child and Family Assessment

The average and percentage scores on Assessment scored identical or nearly identical to last year. The region has scored above the state score for the past seven years.

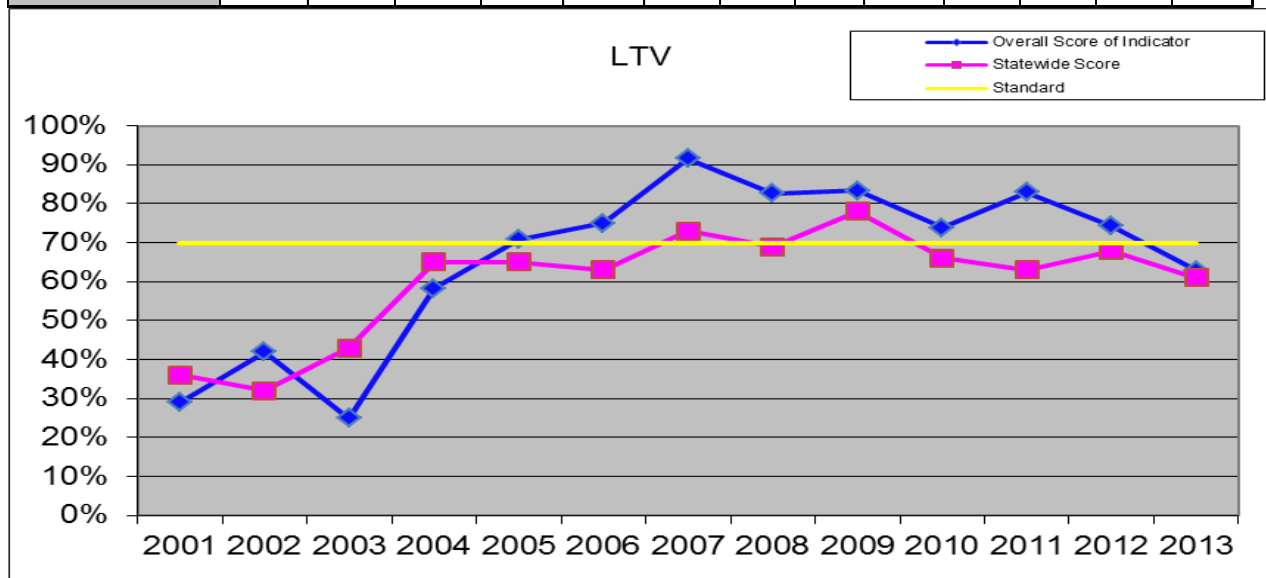
Assessment													
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Average Score of Indicator	3.25	3.54	3.21	3.63	3.83	3.54	4.00	3.91	4.00	4.09	4.21	4.17	4.14
Overall Score of Indicator	42%	54%	42%	54%	67%	54%	79%	70%	79%	78%	79%	83%	83%
Statewide Score	44%	42%	52%	64%	63%	62%	74%	67%	77%	71%	71%	78%	77%



## Long-Term View

Both the average and the percentage scores on Long-term View fell somewhat this year; however, the region score still exceeded the state score.

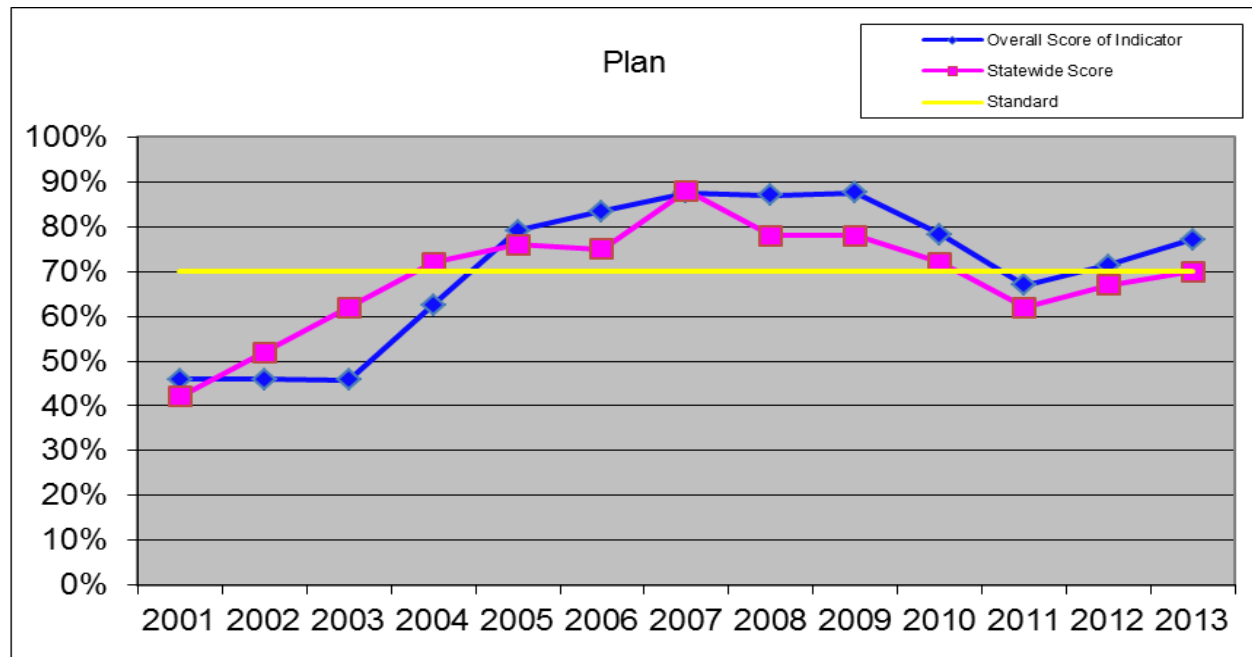
Long-Term View													
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Average Score of Indicator	3.13	3.25	3.04	3.58	4.00	3.83	4.17	4.09	4.25	3.91	4.21	4.14	3.89
Overall Score of Indicator	29%	42%	25%	58%	71%	75%	92%	83%	83%	74%	83%	74%	63%
Statewide Score	36%	32%	43%	65%	65%	63%	73%	69%	78%	66%	63%	68%	61%



## Child and Family Plan

The average score for plan was nearly identical to last year, but the percentage score increased. The region's score was several points higher than the state score.

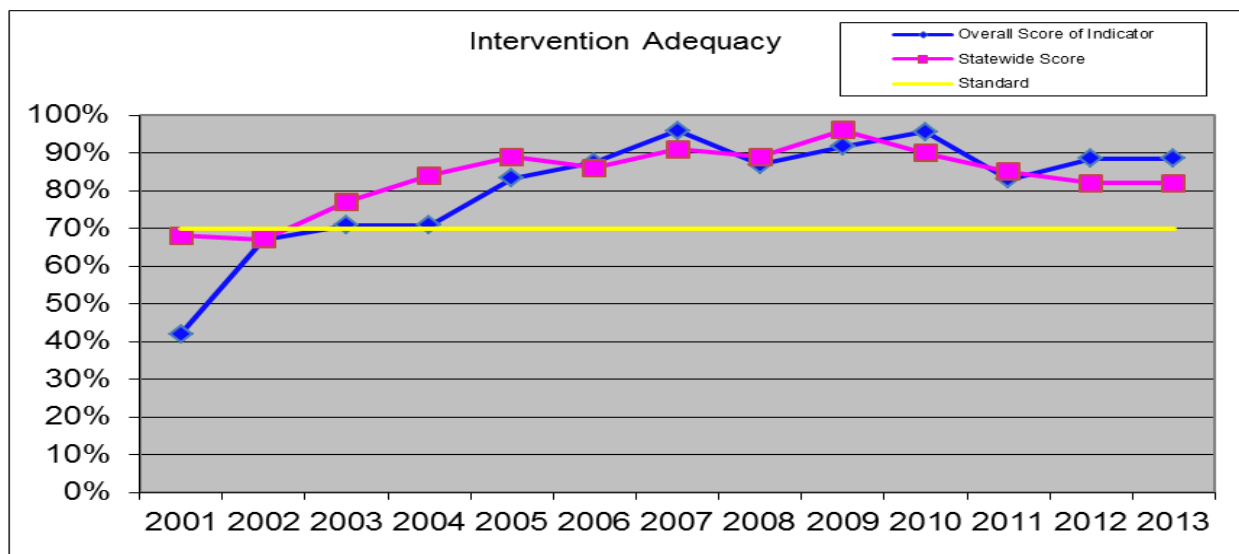
Child and Family Plan													
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Average Score of Indicator	3.42	3.25	3.33	3.79	4.21	4.08	4.33	4.17	4.38	4.17	4.21	4.03	4.00
Overall Score of Indicator	46%	46%	46%	63%	79%	83%	88%	87%	88%	78%	67%	71%	77%
Statewide Score	42%	52%	62%	72%	76%	75%	88%	78%	78%	72%	62%	67%	70%



## Intervention Adequacy

The average score for Intervention Adequacy improved although the percentage score remained the same, meaning there were higher scores on this indicator this year than last year. The region exceeded the state score by seven points.

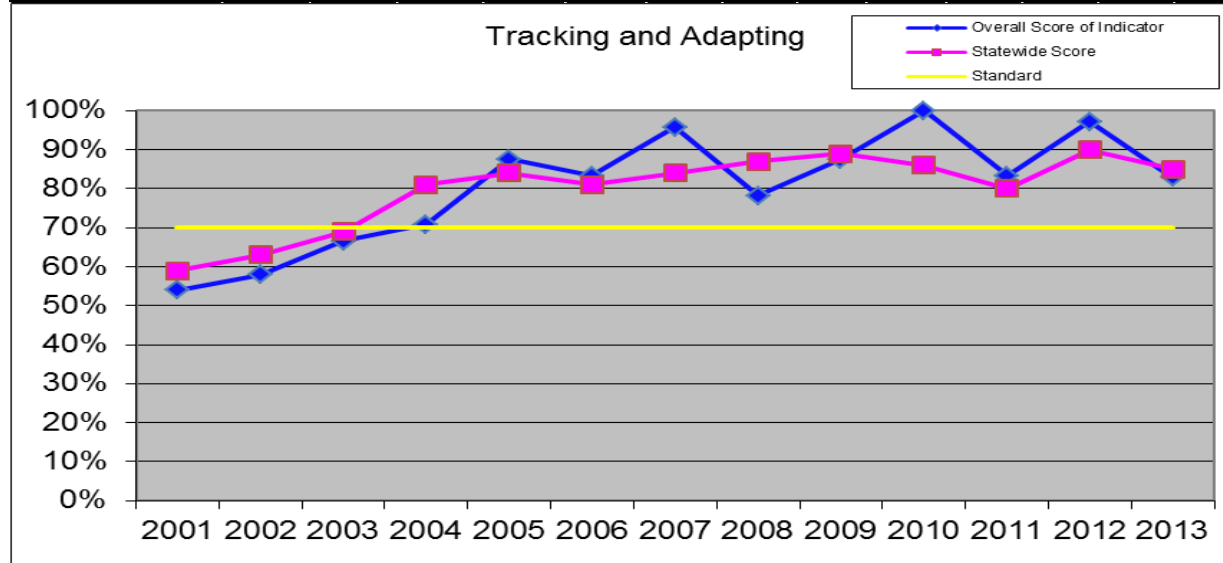
Intervention Adequacy													
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Average Score of Indicator	3.21	3.92	3.92	4.21	4.54	4.33	4.88	4.35	4.58	4.65	4.21	4.31	4.43
Overall Score of Indicator	42%	67%	71%	71%	83%	88%	96%	87%	92%	96%	83%	89%	89%
Statewide Score	68%	67%	77%	84%	89%	86%	91%	89%	96%	90%	85%	82%	82%



## Tracking and Adaptation

Both the percentage and the average scores for Tracking and Adapting declined this year. The region has had excellent scores on this indicator for the past several years. This is the only indicator in which the state score exceeds the region score.

Tracking and Adaptation													
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Average Score of Indicator	3.67	3.92	3.83	4.08	4.58	4.38	4.75	4.22	4.50	4.61	4.46	4.63	4.40
Overall Score of Indicator	54%	58%	67%	71%	88%	83%	96%	78%	88%	100%	83%	97%	83%
Statewide Score	59%	63%	69%	81%	84%	81%	84%	87%	89%	86%	80%	90%	85%



## V. Summary and Recommendations

### Summary

During the FY2013 Northern Region Qualitative Case Review (QCR), numerous strengths were identified about child welfare practice in the Northern Region. It is clear that there is substantial commitment and hard work devoted to ensuring the safety and well-being of the children and families.

The Region scored exceptionally well on Overall Child Status with a score of 94%. This was a healthy increase from last's year's score of 86%. The Overall Child Status Score has been above standard for four consecutive years. Safety remained above the 85% standard, and all of the other seven Child Status indicators were above the 70% standard with the exception of Permanency (60%).

After being just below standard last year, the Overall System Performance score rose to 86% this year, bringing it back above standard. Scores were above standard on all system indicators except Teaming and Long-term View. There were nice increases in both Engagement (86% to 94%) and Plan (71% to 77%).

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Northern Region use the 35 case stories as part of their ongoing effort to improve the services they provide to children and families. The case stories could be used to help sustain performance that is above standard and elevate performance that is below standard. Review of the case stories in which the indicators scored substantially well or optimal could be used as examples in an effort to help duplicate great work. Careful review of the case stories regarding the circumstances that resulted in the unacceptable ratings could be beneficial in formulating training opportunities or specific strategies to address those challenges.

There were three indicators that scored below standard: Permanency, Teaming, and Long-term View. OSR evaluated the stories with unacceptable scores on these indicators looking for patterns or trends. The following observations may be helpful to the region.

#### **PROSPECTS FOR PERMANENCY AND LONG-TERM VIEW**

There were 14 cases with unacceptable scores on Permanency and 13 cases with unacceptable scores on Long-term View. Ten of the 13 stories that had unacceptable scores on Long-term View also had unacceptable scores on Permanency, so these two indicators have been combined for purposes of analysis. The cases with unacceptable scores on Permanency and/or Long-term View can be sorted into three broad groups as follows.

**Child's Behavior**-In six of the cases, the child's behavior was such that the child was either placed in a congregate care setting or was threatening to disrupt their current placement. All but one of these target children were age 12 or older. Not only was each child's behavior resulting in unacceptable permanency, but it was making it difficult for the team to settle on a realistic



permanency goal or identify a placement that could be sustained. For those reasons five of these six cases also had unacceptable scores on Long-term View.

**More Time Needed** (Acceptable System Performance but Unacceptable Child Status)-In three of the cases reviewers found that the permanency goal for the child was realistic and appropriate, and given time the child would achieve permanency as planned. All of these cases had acceptable scores on the system performance indicator of Long-term View, but the child status indicator of Permanency needed a little more time to develop.

**Opportunities for Improvement-** In five of the cases there was work the team still needed to do to come to consensus, answer questions, resolve barriers to permanency, or increase the likelihood that the current placement would be successful. Four of these five cases had unacceptable scores on both Permanency and Long-term View.

## **TEAMING**

There were 11 cases that had unacceptable scores on Teaming. The following four elements of teaming were mentioned by reviewers as lacking. They are listed in order of the number of times they were mentioned as factors in the unacceptable Teaming scores.

**Key members of the team were not participating in team meetings.** Reviewers most often mentioned the mother's therapist, school, and extended family members as missing in spite of their key role in the case. Their absence from the team was often cited as a reason for some of the ongoing challenges in the case. Additional key team members who were missing less often were the caregiver, target child, peer parent, DSPD, and friends.

**There was a lack of shared understanding and common view among team members.** The lack of participation by key team members often led to lack of shared understanding and common view. As reviewers interviewed the various parties to the case, it became apparent that some had key pieces of information that others were unaware of. In other cases there were strong opinions among team members and there was a need for consensus building so the team could move forward united around a common goal.

**Key issues weren't being addressed at team meetings.** In some cases there was a need to address difficult questions or discuss uncomfortable circumstances in the case such as a parent or child recently testing positive for drugs. Although the team was meeting, avoiding difficult issues or not discussing important questions resulted in the team being somewhat ineffective.

**The family felt they didn't have a voice or support at team meetings.** Although parents were in attendance at most team meetings, some left feeling they hadn't been heard, they weren't supported, the meeting belonged to DCFS and they were just told what to do, or they have any sense of ownership.

However, there were also many elements of good teaming demonstrated in practice and observed by reviewers. Even in the cases with unacceptable scores, meetings were usually held frequently, the family's schedule was accommodated, and parents and children were in usually in attendance.